

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

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Senate Committee on Agriculture & Bioeconomy

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Testimony of Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)

Re: Senate Bills 1136, 1137 and 1138; House Bills 5822 (H-2), 5823 (H-1), and 5824 (H-1)

Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you for allowing MUCC the opportunity to comment on House Bills 5822-24 and Senate Bills 1136-38. My name is Dave Nyberg and I am here today on behalf of the 45,000 sportsmen and women of Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

MUCC would like to voice its support and thanks for all your work with this current legislation. We strongly support the ability of allowing for greater depredation of any feral (free-ranging) swine with a valid hunting license – this is a good first step in controlling the increasing problem of feral swine.

Increasing public's awareness of these animals as a threat to wildlife habitat, animal health and our state's economy and not a possible game species is essential to ensuring we treat them as a public nuisance. As a result, MUCC is strongly supportive of the House substitute language in House Bills 5822 and 5824 declaring them as such and encourage that the corresponding Senate Bills include similar language.

Besides the positive work being conducted with this legislation, more action to control feral swine is also needed. It is not too late in Michigan to eradicate these swine off the landscape and we must use every tool at our disposal to do so. The Natural Resource Commission and the Agriculture Commission passed a joint resolution on April 12, 2007 "recommending aggressive action to eliminate feral swine in order to protect animal health, public health, and the environment." MUCC has since adopted that resolution in its entirety as our organization's policy. Copies of that resolution are included in this packet and outlined in that resolution are action items that should be addressed. We urge this committee to address the eradication issue next and use the joint resolution as a basis for legislation.

While MUCC believes more work needs to be done on this important issue, we applaud your leadership in taking up the current legislation, which enables licensed hunters to help eradicate this harmful invasive species, and ask for your "yes" vote on the bills.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Nyberg", written over a horizontal line.

Dave Nyberg

Legislative Affairs Manager